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10 July 1962

OCI Comments on State Department Paper,  
"The White Redoubt"

1. The position of the European settler in southern Africa is probably the most difficult problem facing Africa, and one for which there may be no peaceful and fair solution. The subject paper, however, has played down to a dangerous degree the vital role of the "Europeans"--for whom a better term here might be "White Africans"--in the economic, cultural, and political life of southern Africa. Furthermore, the paper probably exaggerates the influence the United States can wield in African affairs, i.e., its ability to influence in this field either the independent states of Africa or its Western European allies.

2.  the position of Southern Rhodesia and of the Rhodesia-Nyasaland Federation's Prime Minister, Sir Roy Welensky, should be re-evaluated. The influence of Welensky with the white population is declining, and within a year he may not be in a position of leadership. Conversely, Southern Rhodesia's Prime Minister, Sir Edgar Whitehead, with his pragmatic and relatively liberal racial policy, is gaining stature and has within recent years wrought a considerable change in the racial outlook of Southern Rhodesian whites and the colony's racial legislation. This does not mean, however, that racial relations will evolve

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smoothly in Southern Rhodesia--there probably will not be sufficient time. At present there is no indication that any sizable number of Southern Rhodesian whites favor unity with South Africa.

3. The following comments are directed at specific sections of the subject paper:

a. Top of page 5:

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[redacted] the Algerian government will channel assistance to Angolan nationalists through the African High Command, thereby aiding the Communist-influenced MPLA and increasing the pressure on Holden Roberto to unite his moderate movement with the MPLA.

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b. Page 5: The changing of the "PAFMECA" name to "PAFMECSA" (Pan African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa) at the Addis Ababa meeting supports the statement that nationalist attention will be focused increasingly on southern Africa.

c. Paragraph beginning at bottom of page 3: The Communist bloc may well try to increase its influence in southern Africa. So far as direct assistance to dissident movements is concerned, this will be hampered by the logistics problems involved. Minor amounts of small arms may be smuggled in; these should be fairly effective for relatively small guerrilla activities, but hardly for large-scale operations, at least not

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at any time in the near future. The bloc probably will, at least in the early stages of any such program, attempt to remain behind the scene and depend on other African countries to make the actual deliveries.

d. Page 9: Current US difficulties in efforts to secure the backing of Britain, France, and Belgium for action regarding Katanga suggest that it would be difficult to gain the support of those countries for pressuring whites in southern Africa to speed African takeovers there, or for supplying African nationalists with significant quantities of arms and financial resources. Furthermore, it is questionable to what degree Brazil can influence Portuguese policy.

e. Page 13, paragraph (6): Quite considerable sums of money would have to be expended in Angola and Mozambique to establish the educational facilities necessary to train the Africans to play the predominant role in these areas at any time in the near future. Even if such a US-financed effort were made, it is likely that US motives would be misinterpreted by the Afro-Asian and Communist worlds as support for the Portuguese position. The subject paper does not state how the United States would control Lisbon's policies. To win the support of Angolan nationalists we will probably have to supply them with arms and money--with the risk of alienating much of Western Europe; and if this is to be done, it will have to be done quickly, or moderates such as Holden Roberto may be

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eclipsed by Communist-supported groups.

f. Page 14: Present trends in Southern Rhodesia are ignored (see paragraph 2 above), and the assumption here that Welensky will be able to align the colony with South Africa is highly questionable.

g. Page 19, paragraph (1): High-level American approaches at this time to South Africans such as Prime Minister Verwoerd (not president) would be more likely to exacerbate Washington-Pretoria relations than to improve the position of blacks in South Africa. Pretoria would probably respond with bids for large sums of money to improve the welfare of the blacks, at the same time turning a deaf ear to advice. Similarly, unless the US and Britain are prepared to subsidize the Basutoland economy in a costly venture, it will be difficult to prevent South African economic pressure against Basutoland.

h. Page 21: It cannot be taken for granted that Britain, when faced with the possibility of economic dislocation, racial war, and the slaughter of former British subjects, will cooperate in sanctions against South Africa because of ideological differences with the regime in Pretoria.

i. Page 23, paragraph (1): On the question of arms limitations, the paper does not seem to take into account the key point that new nations regard arms as prestige items and symbols of independence; it must be recognized that the Africans will acquire arms somewhere, in most cases not caring about the

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ideological stands of the suppliers.

j. Page 25, paragraph (2): The threat of Chinese Communist intervention appears overdrawn. Peiping is at present exerting only a minor influence in Africa, and its ability to supply economic assistance is restricted by China's industrial limitations and shortage of transportation.

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